UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/SR.498
30 June 1995

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Forty-fifth session

Extraordinary meeting

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 498th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 20 June 1995, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan)

CONTENTS

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

SUMMARY RECORDS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WORKING METHODS

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of the Executive Committee will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.95-01797 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (item 1 of the provisional agenda) (A/AC.96/XLV/L.2)

1. The provisional agenda (A/AC.96/XLV/L.2) was adopted.

SUMMARY RECORDS (agenda item 2) (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.13; A/AC.96/XLV/L.2)

2. The CHAIRMAN noted that, at its 4 April 1995 meeting, the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters had considered conference room paper EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.13, entitled "Reconsideration by the Executive Committee of its need for summary records". According to that document, eliminating summary records would defeat the purpose of the steps taken to reduce the length of the Executive Committee's report and might also undermine the tradition whereby the Executive Committee adopted its decisions by consensus only. Consensus had been facilitated by the fact that the statements, explanations and reservations of delegations were reflected in the summary records. In addition, Executive Committee requirements for summary records had been reduced to 24 hours of meeting time and accounted for a modest percentage of overall meeting costs. The Subcommittee had recommended that the Executive Committee should adopt the draft decision on maintaining its right to receive summary records, contained in an annex to document EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.13, and make the wording of the sixth preambular paragraph somewhat stronger. The secretariat had therefore prepared a revised draft decision whose text was contained in an annex to document A/AC.96/XLV/L.2.

3. Mr. HALL (Secretary of the Executive Committee) indicated that the only change in the text was the replacement of the word "Recalling" by the word "Reaffirming" in the sixth preambular paragraph.

4. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to adopt the draft decision as amended.

5. It was so decided.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WORKING METHODS (agenda item 3) (EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.2; EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.15; A/AC.96/XLV/L.2)

6. The CHAIRMAN noted that at its meeting on 16 January 1995, in accordance with document EC/1995/SC.2/CRP.2, paragraph 10, the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters had decided that a distinction should be made between documents submitted for debate and decision and documents submitted for information. The former should be accompanied by a proposed decision or conclusion, and documents exceeding the six-page limit should be accompanied by a summary. At the 4 April 1995 meeting of the Subcommittee, it had been agreed that the six-page limit agreed in January would also be applied to country chapters presented to the Executive Committee plenary and

that an effort would be made to limit the languages in which country chapters would be automatically issued to English and French. The Subcommittee had also suggested that a formal time-frame should be introduced for the issuing of documentation to be considered at Executive Committee and Subcommittee meetings. It had been agreed that decisions on those matters would be tabled at the Executive Committee's meeting in June 1995. The draft decision annexed to document A/AC.96/XLV/L.2 currently before the Executive Committee reflected the decisions taken by the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters in January and April 1995 and the discussion that had taken place in the Working Group on Executive Committee working methods, which had adopted its report before the current meeting of the Executive Committee.

7. Mr. HALL (Secretary of the Executive Committee), introducing the draft decision on the working methods of the Executive Committee, in particular its documentation, indicated that paragraphs 4, 5, 6 and 7 had been adopted by the Subcommittee on Administrative and Financial Matters in January 1995. Paragraph 8 reflected a decision adopted by the Subcommittee in April 1995. Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 contained a proposal submitted to the Subcommittee in April and adopted by the Working Group on Executive Committee Working Methods immediately before the current meeting of the Executive Committee. Paragraphs 9 and 10 dealt with an item considered at the April meeting of the Subcommittee, the provisions of which had been adopted by the Working Group when it had adopted its report.

8. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there was no objection, he would take it that the Executive Committee wished to adopt the draft decision entitled "Executive Committee documentation", contained in an annex to document A/AC.96/XLV/L.2.

9. It was so decided.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 4)

10. The CHAIRMAN welcomed Bangladesh, India and the Russian Federation as new members of the Executive Committee.

11. Mr. RAO (India) thanked the Chairman for his words of welcome and all the delegations that had supported India's admission to the Executive Committee. India was determined to support the values and principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations as well as the UNHCR programme.

12. Mr. HASHIM (Bangladesh) thanked the Chairman for his words of welcome and said that Bangladesh greatly appreciated the role played by UNHCR in the face of growing difficulties. The ultimate solution of any refugee problem lay in the repatriation of the refugees, followed by their reintegration under conditions respecting their dignity. In 1992, Bangladesh had received more than 250,000 refugees from Myanmar and had done everything it could to fulfil its humanitarian obligations over the past three years, despite the economic constraints and the demographic pressures to which it was subjected. It had received assistance from the international community, including UNHCR, to that

end. The repatriation rate over the last year had been very encouraging, and Bangladesh currently had only about 55,000 refugees in its camps. It was convinced that the goodwill shown by Myanmar, the friendly relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar and the presence of UNHCR in the field would facilitate the smooth repatriation of the refugees under conditions of security. Bangladesh unreservedly supported the mandate of UNHCR, and would not fail to contribute to UNHCR's activities.

13. The CHAIRMAN congratulated Mr. Fakhouri on being appointed to the office of Controller.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.